

Leicester, Mass.<sup>ts</sup>. July 12/64.

Dear friend Webb;

Always your debtor in the epistolary line, I seem especially so just now, for I frequently receive proofs of your remembrance, & interest in our affairs, in notes & newspapers of value. A few days ago came a Manchester paper, containing Sumner's lawyerlike & sophistical argument in his defence, & the editor's reply, quiet but sufficient; and, about the same time, your own little note (via Ohio), which I took to Boston with me & read (portions) at a meeting of our Board of Managers of the Mass.<sup>ts</sup> Socy; and I must have left it, for I cannot find it, (or several other papers wh. I supposed I had with me,) now that I wish for it. They were particularly pleased to get news of John St. Collins, & laughed unanimsly over his Nevada reputation as represented by your son Richard. Yet it is anything but a laughing matter to think of a man, such as J. A. C. once was, betraying his whole <sup>better</sup> nature, - conscience, principle, conviction, & habit - & devoting himself to the use of the "muck-rake", the gross worship of Mammon, the brazen-faced denial of his earlier & better life. Of course he could never have had the real root of moral principle in him, but was led on by an enthusiasm which, while it lasted, made him a very efficient person, capable of wonderful endurance & execution. - From one sentiment in your note we dissented generally, - I believe without exception, - as I had myself done on first reading it, viz. that we, (the U. S. Govt;) were "probably to blame" in the matter of the enlistment of British subjects. I see no evidence of it whatever. Our Govt. claims that it has scrupulously abstained, from <sup>the</sup> first until now, from every thing of the kind, and I believe it is strictly so. The Govt. offers its inducements to men to enlist voluntarily, its pay & its bounty money, to which the several States add aid to families, & often additional cash-bounties. If these inducements are so strong as to attract men to our shores and our service from foreign countries, that is an affair of their own, for which they are answerable to no Govt., and with which ours has nothing to do; and no candid person can complain <sup>of it</sup>. I have no doubt it is true that agents of private manufacturing & other business Corporations, & of emigrant societies,

have gone to Europe to ~~and~~ obtain workmen & laborers for our mills, shops, and farms, all of which are suffering from the scarcity of labour caused by the numbers who have gone into the Army & Navy. This too, I take it, is perfectly legitimate; and even if some of the emigrants, thus aided to our shores, should elect to go into the Army instead of into a Cotton-mill or a machine-shop or upon a farm, - and I dare say there have been some cases of this, - yet this is a matter with which no Govt. has any call or right to interfere, because it is one for which ours is in no sense responsible, having no hand <sup>in</sup> it whatever, & having given no authority to any person or persons thus to act. The wages now paid in this country for the commonest labouring hand, even in the farming districts, are as high as \$2. per day, - in the cities, higher; and the labour of good mechanics & mill-hands of all sorts is <sup>paid</sup> double, & more than double, what it formerly was paid, and we need many more hands in all departments of industry, now, than we have. So that, although the cost of living is larger than it was, yet the rise in wages, of labouring men, mechanics, &c. &c. has advanced in even a greater ratio, and the inducements to emigration hither are as great, perhaps greater than ever. Of course it suits such men as the Marquis of Clarendon to keep any question open & stirring, whereby the American cause may possibly be damaged and the Slaveholding Rebellion helped. Earl Russell's reply would have silenced an ordinarily fair man, I thought, <sup>very</sup> that, whenever proof was adduced of any enlisting on your shores by our Govt., Her Majesty's Govt. would attend to it." But the best answer to that large class in England, to which the Marquis of C. belongs, is that which the "Kearsarge" gave to the "Alabama" lately in the British channel; and Semmes's declaration that his best gunners were men trained on board Her Majesty's ship "Excellent" (!!) will not tend to make that answer any more palatable to them. Now the hatred of America, in England, must writhe & curse under the results of that hour's fight, during the "morning service" which the Times tells about! I cannot conceive of a more pitiable set. "Exceeding mad" hardly will describe ~~them~~; and the Eng. Government will, I believe, have

its hands full to suppress the overflow of bile, and spleen, and what not, which thereby have been engendered. Of course they (the Clannicarde set) will fit Semmes out again with a ship, and a fleet too, if only to sink the "Kearsarge"; for they cannot eat, drink, nor sleep in peace & quietness while that ship floats, I am very sure. And how manly it was in that English yacht, - so accidentally present, - to pick up 30 or 40 of the "Kearsarge's" prisoners, & run off with them; & how remarkable that "Capt. Semmes" happened to be of the number! This is the way in which the seeds of trouble are so often getting sowed, which are to spring up in a future crop of difficulties between this country & England. It is declared here that the yacht belonged to Fraser, Trenholm & Co. of Liverpool. Very likely; but whether so, or not, her presence in Cherbourg harbour, & going out to be near the combatants, were of course pre-arranged; & her making off with Semmes and the others was an atrocious violation of duty & propriety.

Our cause at home makes progress, yet slowly. Gen. Grant has forced Lee and his army steadily backward, and now he beleaguers the city of Petersburg, the most important outpost of Richmond, & has cut off the principal channels of supply and communication of the latter <sup>city</sup>. Just now a considerable Rebel force is in Maryland again, and its advance threatens Baltimore. Strange to say, the Gov<sup>t</sup>, & the people of Maryland & Pennsylvania, seem no better prepared to repel such an invasion than they have heretofore been, to their unspeakable disgrace. Had there existed, - as there easily might have, - a well drilled body of minute men, or militia, in Pennsylvania & Maryland, organized to resist invasion and raids, the whole thing would have been speedily crushed, - or, more likely, would never have been attempted. This rebel force has already done much mischief, & created much alarm - has cut off rail-road & telegraphic communication in some instances, and even, it is said, burnt to the ground the residence of the Governor of Maryland within a short distance of Baltimore. You will get later tidings than any I can now write, by the steamer which takes this. I have no doubt it will work well, even if our people have to suffer tenfold by it what they have suffered.

You of course have observed by our papers that our  
Society, or more properly speaking many of its leading members  
are quite at variance as to the merits & demerits, on Antislavery  
grounds, of the two Presidential candidates thus far nominated  
& of the "platforms" put forth by their respective parties. Into that  
question I cannot go in this note. For myself I can only say  
that, far enough from being satisfied with Mr Lincoln & his Ad-  
ministration, indeed much dissatisfied with him as I am in many  
respects, I deem the Country, its honour, its interests, & its future, more  
safer in his hands than in John C. Fremont's, particularly with  
such advisers as he must needs draw about him. His principal  
democratic supporter, John Cochrane of New York, (who is the nominee  
for the Vice Presidency on the same ticket,) speaks of Fremont & McClellan  
as "twin-cherries upon one stalk", and it is distinctly declared that  
if Fremont is President, George B. McClellan will be Commander  
of the American armies. If Wendell Phillips chooses to help  
forward that consummation, I will not go with him to any such  
work. I prefer the old, even if it be the slow, coach, in whose re-  
moderate progress we have gained the Repeal of all Fugitive-Slave  
the abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia, the exclusion of Slavery  
from all U.S. territory, the prohibition of the Coast-wise Slave-trade, the treaty  
for the suppression of the foreign Slave-trade, the admission of Colored men  
to act and testify in the U.S. Courts, the Proclamation of Freedom to the  
Millions Slaves, the Abolition of Slavery in Maryland, Missouri, &c. as well  
as very many other antislavery acts of a marked & important character.  
I hope you will carefully read Phillips's 2 letters to the New York  
Independent, and T. Tilton's replies to them. The first, & its answer, have  
already been copied into the Liberator, - which will doubtless give them  
also. - In the last Standard is a short paragraph, entitled, The Stan-  
Position Defined. I should be glad to know how far you agree with it. It  
took it from a letter of my own to him, - written without any expectation  
of its being thus adopted; but I am not ashamed of it.

Yesterday I had a very pleasant note from Richard, written at San Francisco, - he having left Virginia City, for good I conclude. He writes in good spirits, says he gets home letters very regularly now, - does not get the "Spectator" (& other papers) which I have sent him, - (the former by your requests); for that I am very sorry, I do not see why they should fail, I directed them very legibly, complied with all the Post Office requirements, & posted them with my own hands, - many of them. This general failure is discreditable to the Department, therefore,

My son Edward has lately been at home with us; - he closed a nearly 2 years' service in the "Mississippi Squadron" by a fever of 7 weeks duration, caused by the malaria of the river-banks, which prostrated him completely. He was barely able to crawl home, but picked up health & strength rapidly on getting among our hills & into our pure, sweet air. Just now he is away, - probably in New York city to-day, - but we hope to see him back in a few days. He is now closing up his accounts for the said 2 years past, and is expecting to be ordered to sea-service soon, & much hoping that it will not be to river or lake-service again. The rest of us are as well as common, and my wife desires to be very affectionately remembered to you. A young Birmingham Cousin <sup>of ours</sup> has just arrived in this country, to seek his fortune, and we are looking for a visit from him here soon.

You will have noticed that old Mr. Quincy has gone hence, - Edmund's father - at the great age of 92. I attended the funeral services last Wednesday. There was a great congregation of the marked men of Boston, Cambridge, & the neighborhood present, - the services not what they should have been. The city authorities are providing, I understand, for a public eulogy. I hope it will be given to a wise head, to do. -

I recently met Mr. H. B. Hammond in the Cars, and had a very pleasant conversation with him indeed. He spoke of the books rec'd. from you, of the money owing to you but not yet paid to him. He would get it into my hands, so soon as it was.

Of Garrison's visit to Washington, & interviews with Pres. Lincoln, I have no time to speak. Ever truly, yours, Saml. May, Jr.

